

Socialist Standard

Official Journal of the Socialist Party of Great Britain and the World Socialist Party of Ireland

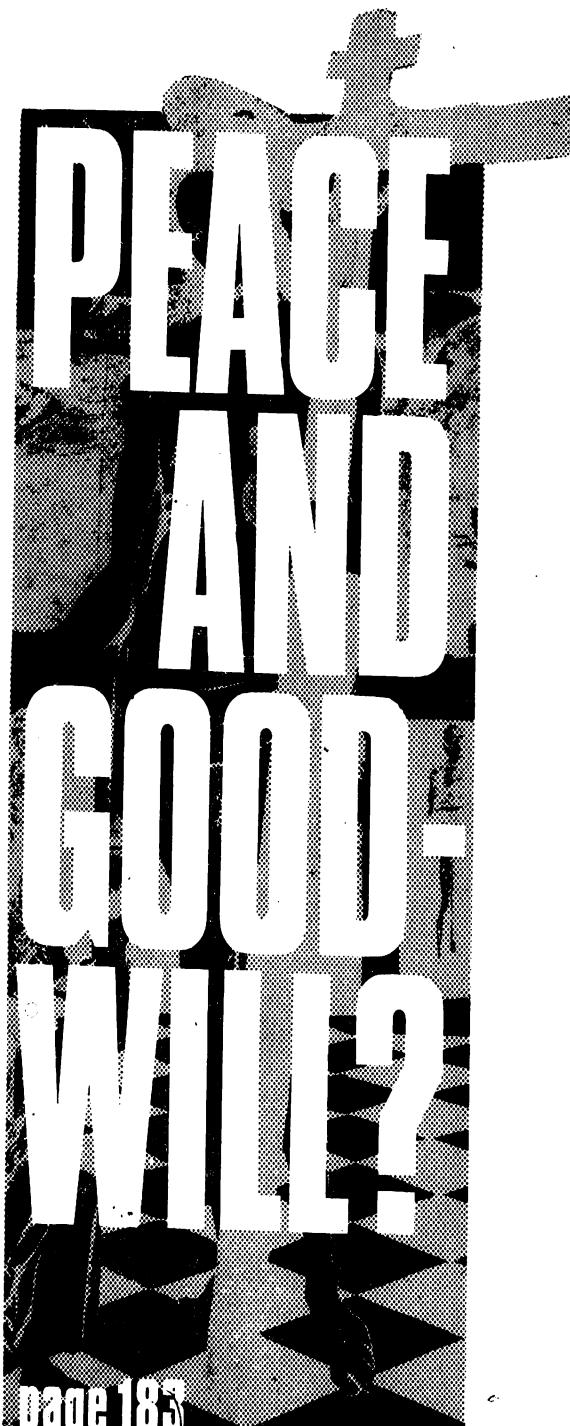
**Christmas, the great
illusion**

Rhodesian crisis

**Socialism or
Christianity**

John Rulls sacred cow

**Immigration and
cultural prejudice**



visitors are cordially invited to every meeting

SPGB Branches

BIRMINGHAM Thursdays 8 pm, "Big Bull's Head", Digbeth. (Discussions 2nd and 4th Thursdays in month.) Correspondence: H. J. Grew, Flat 1, 37 Woodlawn Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham 14.

BLOOMSBURY 1st and 3rd Thursdays in month (2nd and 16th Dec.) Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. Correspondence: SPGB at above address.

CAMBERWELL Mondays 8.30 pm, 52 Clapham High Street, SW4. Correspondence: H. Baldwin, 26 Trelawn Road, SW2.

DARTFORD 1st and 3rd Fridays in month 8 pm, 3rd Dec. at 7 Cyril Rod, Bexleyheath and 17th Dec. at 12 Ickleton Road, Mottingham, SE9. Correspondence: W. G. Catt at above latter address.

GLASGOW Every Monday 8 pm, 163a Berkeley Street. Correspondence: S. Donaldson, 37 Beltane Street, Glasgow, C3.

HACKNEY 2nd & 4th Wednesdays in month 8 pm, Hackney Trades Hall, Vallette St. (off Mare St.), E9. Correspondence: S. Beck, 28 Petherton Road, NS.

ISLINGTON Thursdays 8 pm, Co-op Hall, 129 Seven Sisters Road, N7. (Lecture or discussion after business.) Correspondence: D. Gluck, 201 Adelaide Road, NW3.

KENSINGTON Fridays 8 pm, 55 Meadowvale Road, Edgware, W5. (temporarily). Correspondence: R. Cain, 35 Waltham Road, Southall, Middlesex.

KINGSTON upon THAMES Fridays 8 pm, 80 Farne Road, Esher, Surrey. Correspondence: SPGB at above address.

LEWISHAM Mondays 8 pm Co-op Hall (Room 1), Davenport Road, Rushey Green, Catford, SE6. Correspondence: SPGB, Co-op Hall, Davenport Road, SE6.

MID HERTS Meets 1st and 3rd Monday in month at The Red Lion, High Street, Old Town, Stevenage; and 2nd and 4th Monday at the Blackhouse Rooms, Houndsditch Lane, Welwyn Garden City; 8 pm. Correspondence: Joyce Knight, 30 Broom Close, Hatfield, Herts. Tel.: Hatfield 4802.

NOTTINGHAM 1st Sunday in month (5th Dec.) at 3.30 pm in the Committee Room, Co-operative Hall, Heathcoat Street, Nottingham. Enquiries: G. Hallam, 14 Church Drive, Carrington, Nottingham.

PADDINGTON & MARYLEBONE Wednesday 8.30 pm, Royal Oak, York Street, WI (near Marylebone Rd.). Correspondence: SPGB; 76 Ladbrooke Grove, W11.

SOUTH EAST ESSEX 1st and 3rd Thursdays (2nd and 16th Dec.) Co-op Hall, Vange, 8 pm. Correspondence: D. V. Ford, 46 Wellington Avenue, Westcliff-on-Sea.

SWANSEA Alternate Mondays (6th and 20th) Dec. 8 pm, Old Red Cow, High St., Swansea. Correspondence: 10 Frances Ambridge, Mareds, Brinlithow, Llanyllwyn, Swansea.

WEST HAM 2nd and 4th Thursdays (9th and 23rd Dec.) in month, 8 pm, Salisbury Road Schools, Manor Park, E12. (Discussions from 9 pm.) Correspondence: D. Peutz, 117 Pettit's Lane, Romford, Essex.

WEST LONDON Fridays 8 pm, Westcott Lodge, Lower Mall, Hammersmith (facing river few minutes from Broadway). Correspondence: B. Warnecke, 158 Whitton Avenue East, Greenford, Middx.

WOOD GREEN & HORNSEY Fridays 8.30 pm, 17 Dorset Road, N22. Correspondence to: E. L. McKone at above address.

Woolwich 2nd and 4th Friday (10th and 24th Dec.) in month, 7.30 pm, Town Social Club, Mason's Hill, SE18. (Discussions at 8 pm.) Correspondence: H. C. Ramsay, 9 Milne Gardens, Eltham, SE9.

SPGB Groups

BRIGHTON 3rd Friday in month, 18 Nicholas Road. Enquiries: B. Nelson, above address.

BROMLEY For further information contact I. Robertson. Phone Farnborough (Kent) 51719.

KIDDERMINSTER Enquiries: J. Amos, 31 St Hill, Broadwaters. Meets 2nd Wednesday in month at 7.30 pm, Station Inn, Farfield, Coberton Road, Kidderminster.

MANCHESTER Meets last Friday in month. at 7.30 pm, The International Centre, George Street. Enquiries: A. Atkinson, 4 St. Martins

Road, Ashton on Mersey, Sale, Nr. Manchester. Tel. PYR 2404.

OXFORD Regular meetings monthly, contact A. Robertson, 52 Henley St., Oxford. Tel. 47302.

SUNDERLAND Enquiries P. Toomey, 9 Gillington Road, Grindon's Estate, Sunderland, Co. Durham. Meets 1st Sunday in month, 8 pm, Crown & Thistle, High St., W.

SOUTHEND Regular discussions (Literature available). Enquiries: H. G. Cottis, 19 Kingswood Chase, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex.

For information

BRISTOL Enquiries: J. Flowers, 6 Backfields (Upper York Street), Bristol 12. Tel: 24680.

EARLS COURT & DISTRICT Interesting discussions, regular meetings. Further details: L. Cox, 13 Shelly House, Churchill Gdns., SW1. Tel: VIC 0427.

MITCHAM & DISTRICT Enquiries: T. Lord, 288 Church Road, Mitcham.

OLDHAM Wednesdays 7.30 pm, 35 Manchester Street. Enquiries: R. Lees at above address. Tel: MAI 5165.

WSPI Branches

BELFAST Tuesdays 8 pm, 5 Granville Buildings, 53 High Street, Belfast 1.

CENTRAL Details from Secretary, 24 Newington Avenue, Belfast 15.

DUBLIN Regular meetings. Details from Secretary: 5 Seville Terrace, North Strand, Dublin 1.

SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

OBJECT

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

The SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN holds:

- 1] That Society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
- 2] That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.
- 3] That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
- 4] That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.
- 5] That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
- 6] That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.
- 7] That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
- 8] The SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be brought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desire enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.

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SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

The EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE meets every Tuesday at the SPGB Head Office, 52, Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4, at 7.30 p.m.

Orders for LITERATURE should be sent to the Literature Department, SPGB, at the above address.

CORRESPONDENCE for the Executive Committee should be sent to the General Secretary, SPGB, 52, Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4 (Telephone: Macaulay 3811).

Letters containing POSTAL ORDERS etc., should be sent to E. LAKE, SPGB, at the above address. Postal orders and cheques should be crossed and made payable to the SPGB.

Articles, correspondence, notices of meetings, etc., for the SOCIALIST STANDARD should be sent to the Socialist Standard Production Committee, 52, Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4.

WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY OF IRELAND

The EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE meets 4th Sunday of each month at the Head Office, 5, Granville Buildings, 53, High Street, Belfast 1, at 3.30 p.m.

Peace and Goodwill?

Peace on Earth and Goodwill to all Men.

This Christian slogan, which we hear so often at this time of year, may give some comfort to those who are susceptible to it.

But what is it worth?

Peace On Earth. This year has had no Cuba, no Berlin crisis, nor any other comparable event to make us fear that we were coming to the brink of the third World War. By the standards of modern capitalism, 1965 may seem to have been a peaceful year.

Peaceful, that is, if we ignore the minor outbreaks like the fighting in Dominica, the Congo, Aden and a host of similar places. Peaceful if we forget the flare-ups in the Rann of Kutch and Kashmir. Peaceful if we take no account of the bloody struggle in Vietnam.

What is the cause of these wars? A lack of goodwill? We live in a social system in which competition—between companies, between countries, between groups of countries—goes on all the time. It cannot be avoided—and neither can its consequences. Periodically international competition has to be transferred from the conference halls to the battlefields, adding another war to capitalism's history of bloodshed.

People may protest against this, as many of them have protested against the war in Vietnam. But the protests are futile. Modern war is caused by the nature of capitalist society and the only effective protest we can make against it is to change society into one where the conflicting interests which give rise to war are absent.

Goodwill To All Men. This year we have had the riots in Los Angeles, with their background of simmering revolt against racial oppression. We have had the conflict over Rhodesia, underlaid with clashing economic interests and racial intolerance. We have seen the ever-tightening screw of immigration control in this country, as the Government tried to appease an awakening racism among the British working class. We have had the usual bouts of strikes and other symptoms of social disharmony.

There have, of course, been people to regret this situation.

But again, their protests are futile. Racial theories among the working class can in large part be attributed to their insecurity and to their poverty—to their housing difficulties, their fears for the future of their jobs. It can also be partly explained as a reaction when workers see an easily identifiable minority using already inadequate hospitals, schools and other so-called social services, and to an ever-present desire to find a scapegoat for the problems of life in capitalism.

The competition between one worker and another over a job, or a house, and the strikes and other disputes which go on year after year, are nothing more than a symptom of a basic feature of capitalism—the fact that the vast majority of people have to sell their working abilities in order to live.

In these conditions, the slogan Goodwill To All Men is meaningless.

It is useless to wish that human beings would not behave in anti-social, non-co-operative ways as long as the working class support a social system which encourages, sometimes even forces, them to act in those ways. After all, many of capitalism's most respected leaders have got where they are by displaying anything but goodwill.

The world is in an agony of dispute. Only by a basic change in society—by a social revolution by the world working class to end capitalism and replace it with Socialism—can this agony be ended.

When that revolution comes we shall have lasting peace and goodwill will no longer be a pious slogan, but an established and accepted part of human existence.

Christmas – the great delusion

CHRISTMAS, we shall be told again and again during the next few weeks, is for the children. There is, of course, another side to it, represented by the flood of gaudy rubbish which fills the shops, the big campaigns to sell it, and by the tinsel of nonsense with which the whole thing is embellished. This is not so romantic a vision as that of innocent, starry-eyed kiddies hanging their stockings by the chimney—and it suggests that, whatever enjoyment children may get out of it, Christmas is for a few other people as well.

As the City columns, the advertising agencies, and the trade statistics make clear, Christmas is that thing so beloved of a section of the capitalist class—a spending spree. Millions of people save up, perhaps for the entire year, for this one great splash-out. This is the time when savings vanish, bonuses are blued, hire purchase debts cheerfully taken on. These debts have partly replaced the old loan clubs, which used to have their big pay-out at Christmas. In fact, hire-purchase does no more than the clubs—it simply moves the payment date from one part of the year to another, but this is enough to make it one more piece of evidence for those who are trying to prove that we are all so much better off nowadays.

Christmas is responsible for an amazing expansion of the retail market, lasting for about a month at a time when trade would probably otherwise be slack. For example, the sales of one suburban branch of a famous retail chain bound up to around thirty thousand pounds on Saturdays during December; the manager can almost forecast what his sales figure will be for each weekend. These sales are in the established, non-seasonal goods such as clothes, which simply become more hectic during the Christmas rush. There are plenty of other examples, as people determinedly smoke more cigarettes, eat more food, and of course drink more alcohol during the space of a couple of days than they do in a normal week.

Apart from the established trades, there are the seasonal sales, with an appeal confined exclusively to the Christmas period. Christmas crackers, for instance, are being turned out all the year round; even the men who compose those dreadful jokes and mottoes are hard at it months in advance. The result of all this is that about one hundred million crackers are sold at Christmas, some of them abroad.

We must not forget Christmas cards. The first of these was sent in 1843; the idea did not catch on for about twenty years and since then the market has steadily expanded until now something over six hundred million cards, worth about 15 million, are sent each Christmas. This is good business for the firms which make the cards (one of whose executives said a little while ago "We are in the sentiment business") and for the Post Office, who rake in something like £8 million in postage on the cards, not to mention the extra revenue on Christmas parcels, greetings telegrams, 'phone calls and the rest.

It is anyone's guess, how much of the spending at Christmas goes in a genuine effort to have, or to give someone else, a good time. A lot of the drinks, presents and smokes are sent as bribes (there is no other words for it) from the directors of one firm to those of another which, they hope, will buy their products. A host of calendars, diaries, packs of cards, are produced as advertising material. Some Christmas cards are sent out by firms as reminders that they are still in business—and magnificent pieces of work some of them are.

Apart from the business world, there is no doubt that a lot

of money is spent at Christmas in an effort to impress other people. We have all seen—perhaps some of us have actually received—those Christmas cards which have so obviously been selected with the motive of convincing us that the senders are more wealthy and important than they actually are. We have all read the advertisements which say that no card is really gracious unless it has the senders' name and address printed on the inside. It is an unpleasant fact that the acquisitive nature of capitalism gives strength to this sort of appeal; for those who fall for it, sending Christmas cards is a highly competitive business, in which a defeat has to shoulder for a whole year before the chance for revenge comes round again.

The fact is that Christmas is in some ways a time for people to show their less attractive side—and for the massed forces of commercialism to cash in on the situation, ruthlessly and to the full, with the only justification they need—in the end they have more profit than if they had not played up to peoples' snobbery, their insecurity and their distorted conception of the world in which they struggle to live.

In other ways, too, commerce turns the screw at Christmas. A walk around any department store reveals an astounding variety of junk which is being sold at equally astounding prices. There are toys which are dangerous, or which will not last from Christmas to Boxing Day in the hands of any child. There are cakes of soap and bath cubes, stuck in a fancy box and covered in cellophane, selling for much more than their usual price. There is a bewildering mass of tinsel, plastic and coloured paper—and all the time there is the drive to sell, sell, sell for a Merry Christmas.

Yes, this is an enormous, briefly inflated, market; each year the note circulation leaps up to accommodate it. (Last year it increased from £2,583 million in the first week in November to £2,766 million in Christmas week.) The firms which hope to cash in on the boom lay their plans a long time ahead. From the summer months onwards, they are discussing and deciding on their advertising campaigns, their special wrappings and what they like to call their "presentation". There is always the temptation for them to try to get in first, which they have to resist for fear of opening their campaign too early. But none of them can afford to leave it too late—they have such an awful lot to sell. So it is not uncommon for us to be able to buy Christmas decorations, wrappings, cards and so on in October; and before Guy Fawkes night there are not a few big stores with their Father Christmas, usually an unemployed stage extra, to induce people to buy by working on their children.

Many people complain that the Christmas sales campaign starts too early. But as the market is stimulated to grow, and as it grows, so will the effort to exploit it. This might mean an even longer sales drive in the future—wasn't there a story about a business man who said that Christmas was good business as long as they kept religion out of it?

He must have been an ungrateful fellow; religion, after all, does him many a good turn. In any case, as we point out elsewhere in this issue, Christmas has nothing to do with Christianity; the Christians simply pinched it to suit their own purposes. What more natural, then, than that the capitalist social system, which is so faithfully supported by Christianity, should itself adopt Christianity's most important festival for its own ends?

It was the Industrial Revolution which was responsible for reducing the old twelve days' holiday at Christmas to a single day. The rise of capitalism meant that masses of people sold

their working ability to the master class by time—and time spent on holidays was time not spent producing the masters profits in the factory or the mill or the mine. Capitalism, with the help of its religious lackeys, built up a massive condemnation of what it called idleness. And among other things it destroyed the ancient Twelve Days of Christmas.

More recently, capitalism has reduced the opposition to Christmas to a handful. Nobody now holds the opinion expressed in a Puritan pamphlet of 1656, that Christmas was "... the old Heathen's Feasting Day . . . the Papists' Massing Day, the Superstitious Man's Idol Day . . . Satan's That Adversary's Working Day" but until fairly recently there was a solid, articulate opposition to it. This is now all but silent, as the festival has been blown up into a vast, commercialised orgy of selling and consumption, one of the many working class Festivals of Delusion.

The great Delusion of Christmas is that dormant within us there is the Christmas Spirit—a gentle compound of benevolence, co-operation and goodwill which is roused at this time of year by the appeal of religion. When we are possessed of the Spirit we are wise and generous and loving; if only (says the Delusion) we could keep it up all the year round the problems of the world would be solved. If we would only cast out the Scrooges among us (and we all have our own idea of who Scrooge may be) and live by the Christmas Spirit there will be no more poverty, or war, or oppression.

This is no joke; the Delusion is powerful. It brought both sides out of their trenches to fraternise in No Man's Land in 1914 (officially, that was the last time they did it). It inspires countless maudlin speeches at office parties and family gatherings. It runs through the entire Queen's Speech on Christmas Day. It is powerful—and it is dangerous.

For the Delusion fosters the idea that the troubles of capitalism are caused by anything but the essential nature of the system. It promotes the nonsense that the world today is a fearsome, disturbed place because people are bad and that if only people were better the world would be a better place. It encourages people to think in terms of good and bad spirit, when they should be asking themselves why they behave as they do, and why the world is as it is. And as a final irony, the Christmas Delusion even encourages some people to think that there is something inconsistent in the determined way that capitalism exploits Christmas for all it is worth.

To start at the right end of this problem, we should first of all realise that there is nothing essentially wrong (or right, for that matter) with most people. It is the conditions of living and working under capitalism which largely make them what they are. Capitalism is constantly working out ways of exploiting us more efficiently, which means more intensely. It is always pushing us that bit harder, crowding us in that much more, making us into that much more of a cut-throat in the competitive scramble for the better job, the bigger house, the easier money.

In these conditions, people live at an intense pressure. Events which in themselves are trivial—a telephone which rings, a child who behaves like a child—are an intolerable strain. It is only when we relax, when we put aside the worry of making ends meet, when we try to live like human beings, that we begin to get a better perspective on it all. Perhaps this is what a lot of people do at Christmas. Some of them, for a couple of days at any rate, actually succeed, and they put it all down to the Christmas Spirit.

The big laugh about this—if anyone can stand another joke at this time of year—is that if the working class really grasped the implications of this they would take a hard, sober look at capitalism and see it for the wretched way of living that it is. That old chap Scrooge had a word which aptly describes the delusions of capitalism, its cynicism and its hypocrisy. *Humbug.*

IVAN.

Christmas, past and present

THE festival we know as Christmas is far older than Christianity. It is one of the institutions that the early Christians adopted from their pagan rivals.

During its teething years it was touch and go whether Christianity survived or succumbed to its foremost rival, Mithraism. The Mithraists were sun worshippers and they combined a solemn fertility ritual with aspirations after moral purity and a hope of immortality. The main Mithraic festival was held at the winter solstice, that time from which, each year, the days began to lengthen and the sun to arouse from its winter rest with the promise of a fertile springtime. The focal point of the ritual was a portrayal of a virgin giving birth to a new sun.

The Christian gospels give no hint of the date of the birth of their Christ and, accordingly, the early Christian Church did not celebrate it. The Christian priests were severe men and women who urged their followers to live equally severe lives of work, abstinence and charity. But they found that many of their adherents took part in the solemnities and festivities of the Mithraists and, if they wished to win and retain converts, they would have to pander to peoples' hearty liking for festivity and pageantry. Accordingly, the Christians of Egypt came to regard January 6th (by the Julian calendar) as the date of the nativity of their Christ and the custom of commemorating his birth on that date spread until, by the beginning of the fourth century, it was widely adopted in the east.

The western Christian church, probably influenced by the Roman festival of Saturnalia and the northern Yule, was the first to adopt December 25th, the day of the winter solstice, for their Christmas celebrations. The idea spread until, at an assembly held at Antioch in the year 375 A.D., the eastern church accepted the same date and officially changed from January 6th to December 25th.

As well as taking over the date of the pagan festival the Christians absorbed many of the heathen rites and symbols, such as the virgin birth, the burning of candles and the use of seasonal greenery for decoration.

By the middle ages Christmas was firmly established as the foremost annual Christian festival. The period of ritual and celebration extended over the whole twelve days from December 25th to Epiphany. It was a time of feasting, music, dancing, mumming, boisterous fun, and horseplay with the religious significance prominent in, but not dominating, the festivities. The twelve days ended with a ceremonial return to work on what was then known as Plough Monday.

A number of religious symbols from different parts of the world had become grafted on to the Christmas ritual. The mistletoe, considered a sign of fertility in some areas, became part of the Christmas festivity. The yule log, originally cut from the oak tree on which mistletoe was supposed to grow prolifically, became the traditional fuel for the occasion. Saint Nicholas of Russia, who died in 350 A.D., was eventually adopted by the Greek church and legends illustrating his benevolence and good nature were handed down to create the image of the Santa Claus of later generations.

The sixteenth century saw a growth in early capitalist industry and the first pressures being applied to abridge the period of Christmas festivity. Early restrictions had little effect in agricultural areas but it was easier to keep the poverty-stricken wage workers of the towns with their noses to the grindstone. For them a long holiday meant unbearable privations.

In England, effective political action to subdue Christmas festivities came with the Puritan revolution of the seventeenth century. During the period of the so-called Commonwealth fun and frivolity was severely frowned upon and even the churches were closed on Christmas day.

The next two hundred years witnessed the complete commercialisation of the festival. Capitalism drew each aspect of the institution into its maw. The spontaneous games and recreations were gradually replaced by organised entertainment; the amateur religious players and mummers made way for paid entertainers; communal self-help dried up and a smug, dignity-destroying charity took its place.

Nineteenth century sentimental writers, like Dickens and Kingsley, focussed attention on the pitiable plight of the working class after the Industrial Revolution. They were of the "change-of-heart" school of reformers, urging employers to be a little more charitable to their employees. Dickens best depicted the attitude in his *A Christmas Carol* wherein he portrays a mean and grasping employer; scared by a bad dream into becoming a charitable man on Christmas day and a little less mean one in the days following, to the benefit of his happiness and at the expense of his bank account.

Practically all of the Holy days of the middle ages have been eliminated. May day, as a workers' holiday, has been moved to a Sunday in May where it does not interfere with the working week, but the tradition of Christmas, shorn of most of its religious significance, dies hard. It lives on because it offers an attractive expansion of the market for innumerable goods. Workers save up for much of the year to have a spending spree and some festivity over the Christmas period. New symbols are introduced from time to time to attract these hard earned savings into different pockets. Christmas trees were an innovation, developed in this country from a German custom, during the reign of Queen Victoria following her marriage to Albert of Saxe Coburg. Christmas cards are also a comparatively recent profit making introduction.

The attitude of capitalist politicians to the festive season is often amusingly contradictory. In 1939, with a war getting under way, the Chancellor of the Exchequer broadcast a plea to save money to keep prices down, a minister at the Board of Trade called for a little spending to keep trade on the move, a state Forestry official announced that plenty of Christmas trees would be available as usual, firms with gift goods to market advertised them up to the hilt, and writers in

the press urged people not to bankrupt patriotic business men who were doing their best to pay the costs of the war.

Social institutions are measured by their adaptability to a commodity producing society and are fostered or discouraged according to their usefulness to a profit making system.

Noble sentiments are prostituted and even the charity advocated by Christians is harnessed to the capitalist cart and whipped up with the gift-giving pleas and advertisements at Christmas.

WATERS.

Christianity or Socialism

THE month Christians celebrate the birth of their Christ. It is therefore appropriate once again to examine the Christian religion and its relations to socialism and the working class.

Christianity is a comparatively recent religion but it is thick with the debris of man's earlier superstitions. The pagan influence on the Christmas festival is especially well marked, for December 25th was a holy day long before Jesus Christ was even thought of. Primitive man worshipped the sun because the course of his life was dominated by the yearly round of that planet in the heavens. This practice was widespread but especially in northern countries mid-December was thought to be a critical time, as the days became shorter and shorter and the sun itself weaker. Great bonfires were lit to give the sun god strength and, when it became apparent that the shortest day had passed, there was great rejoicing. Thus the Roman winter-solstice festival, held on December 25th in connection with the worship of the sun-god Mithra, was known as the birthday of the unconquered sun-god.

December 25th was not generally introduced into the Western Church as Christmas day until the fourth century and it was even later before it was accepted in the Eastern Church. Several Christian sects had previously fancied the 24th or 25th of April as a suitable "holy" period—thus arbitrarily connecting Christ's birth with the vernal equinox rather than the winter-solstice—while still other factions chose alternative solar festivals. However, St. Chrysostom (5th century) gives a very practical reason why December 25th was to be preferred. "On this day the birthday of Christ was lately fixed at Rome, in order that while the heathens were occupied in their profane ceremonies the Christians might perform their holy rites undisturbed."

Man's consciousness is a reflection of his material environment. While he was struggling to find his feet in the universe it was understandable that he should interpret phenomena which he could not comprehend in supernatural terms but, in the twentieth century, such irrational relics from the past can be of no value to the working class.

Christians have argued against the materialist conception of history by claiming that the driving force behind the universe is a god's will and that, while everything else may be subject to change, God and his religion remain constant. Yet the briefest examination of Christ and his theories shows him clearly as a product of his times. For example, he plainly shared the then common belief that disease was due to infesta-

tion with demons and he told his followers, "In my name ye shall cast our devils". Again, religion has always been the willing tool of the ruling class. The church today holds chattel slavery to be immoral. But when Constantine the Great accepted the Christian religion the pope of the time received him with acclamation and no one suggested to him the need to surrender his slaves, of which he held thousands. Similarly the Christians' god today dutifully reflects the interests of capital. Thus for hundreds of years the popes excommunicated those who put their money out at usury and denied them Christian burial because of this "grievous sin". Yet, strangely, since Pope Benedict XIV's condemnation in 1745, God has not moved his spokesmen to breathe one word against this practice.

We are told that the Bible is God's word. This being the case, his laconic message could not be clearer—"Thou shalt not kill". The record of the Christian churches in this century alone illustrates that they have never hesitated to take sides in Capitalism's bloody quarrels. In the first world war the workers were urged to slaughter one another with God on their lips: "God of our Fathers . . . Be thou the rampart of our costs, the frontline of the battlefield". And in the second world war Christians intoned in harmony with capitalist interests in both Germany and Britain. "You have every reason to say prayers for the Führer. May God preserve him, because we need an eternal Germany." (Reported in the *Daily Mail*, May 9th, 1944.)

On the other hand in the *Church of England Newspaper*, February 23rd, 1940, we find a thoroughly English god rallying under the Union Jack: "It is to the living God therefore we must look for deliverance in the present hour. He it is Who delivered our fathers from the 'Invincible' Spanish Armada; He appeared on our behalf in 1914-18; and He will help us now if we call upon Him with a true heart."

Capitalism is a dirty business, based as it is upon the misery of the majority of mankind. But it is well served by its priesthood, always ready with the facile lie and the glib distortion to endorse the actions of the bourgeoisie and persuade the workers that their present lot is part of some unalterable, God-given system.

Clearly then the Christian religion is a most versatile creed. Is it possible that it could be adapted again to serve the interests of a socialist society? The answer is no, for at all times Christianity and Socialism are contradictory. Socialism involves a rejection of leadership and the determination that the workers themselves must achieve socialism. Conversely, Christianity is rooted in a blind faith in leaders, both worldly and supernatural. The priests urge their flocks to remain servile and reap the blessings of poverty. They say that it is not up to the workers to consider the system which robs them, throws them into unemployment, subjects them to war and disease; that it God's province. The Bishop of Barcelona

orders: "Have confidence in your Bishops, who have received from God the mission of commanding; learn to obey . . . do not change a word of the directives that the Holy Church gives you through the Bishops. Be obedient!"

Again, within capitalist society there is a continual class struggle which can only be abolished by the establishment of a classless society—socialism. But Christians believe that there is a harmony of interests under capitalism. Pope Leo XIII in his Encyclical on Labour asserted: "If one man hires out to another his strength or his industry, he does this in order to receive in return the means of livelihood, with the intention of acquiring a real right, not merely to his wage, but also to the free disposal of it . . . Socialists . . . strike at the liberty of every wage-earner, for they deprive him of the liberty of disposing of his wages." The good pope has a point—in that socialism will certainly deprive everyone of the "liberty" of wage-slavery. However, with typical Christian charity (towards the bourgeoisie) he chooses to overlook the fact that under capitalism the workers are forced to sell their labour power to the owners of the means of living. This is not, as the pope suggests, a case of fair exchange but is based upon the appropriation of the surplus value created by the workers by the master class.

Yet there are those who still maintain that Socialism and Christianity can somehow be synthesised, given the right leader as a catalyst. The Labour Party has always taken this line and the so-called Christian Socialist Movement lingers on, desperately trying to create some sort of comprehensible amalgam out of conflicting idealist and materialist theories. Their analysis of capitalism is based upon the contention that it is an "evil" system, rooted in sin. But in their literature we find: "Capitalism has served mankind by accumulating capital, so making large scale production possible and increasing wealth generally . . ." Thus these Christian gentlemen admit that what they call "sin" and "evil" have been of service to man. This inconsistency is the inevitable result of trying to accommodate Christianity and Socialism—the utopian and the scientific.

Christmas is supposed to be a time of good cheer, when the harsh reality of this world is briefly forgotten. But it is impossible to disregard capitalism even at this time of the year. We address our Christmas message to the working class, about to enjoy yet another wretched holiday under capitalism—the system they chose to perpetuate when they voted for the Labour and Tory parties last October. That man of the people, the sanctimonious Harold Wilson, has gone on record as talking of "our quest for the Kingdom of God on earth". After one year of Labour government the conclusion in inevitable; God and Mr. Wilson are forced to administer capitalism in the interests of the ruling class as ever. But then Mr. Wilson is not a socialist—and neither is God.

J.C.

NEW YEAR RESOLUTION SUBSCRIBE FOR SOCIALIST STANDARD

John Bull's sacred cow

IT is pathetically easy to poke fun at Royalty. Look at any copy of *Private Eye* for the yobly kind of satire, or "This England" in the *New Statesman* for authenticated stories about incidents such as the removal of lavatory signs "to avoid embarrassment" during a royal visit. The trouble with such side-swipes, however, is that they leave the basic nature of the institution unexamined and untouched. (Indeed, for the satire industry to survive it is imperative that this butt of its jokes remains unchanged.)

A more difficult, but also more useful, job is to define the exact position of the Queen and the Royal Family in relation to the rest of society. For until we have an understanding of the total situation, we have neither the ability, nor do we grasp the need, to change the social structure.

The first and most obvious point is that the Royal Family are members of the capitalist class. That is, they own so much wealth, in the form of vast estates, that it is economically unnecessary for them to work. This means, for example, that they can enjoy themselves at Ascot and similar places as often as they please, without having to pinch an afternoon off from the office or to wait for their week of night-shift to come round (Not that most of us could afford to go to Ascot even under these conditions). It also means that, like the rest of the capitalist class, the Royal Family can have the very best of everything without having to worry about the price.

However, the position of the Queen and her family within this ruling class is, of course, quite unique—and in a paradoxical way which her title would not lead us to believe. Whereas some capitalists, when they tire of Cannes and caviar, may wish to turn their unoccupied minds to politics it is expected of Royalty that they should be above this sordid fray. The Duke of Edinburgh will be tolerated when he tells the workers in industry to "pull their finger out" but if he starts giving more specific advice on British Foreign policy he hits the national headlines.

As regards the Queen, too, we may agree with the official statement:

"In law, she is the head of the executive, an integral part of the legislature . . . In practice, as a result of a long evolutionary process during which the absolute power of the monarchy has been progressively reduced, the Queen acts only on the advice of her ministers, which she cannot constitutionally ignore. She reigns but she does not rule. The United Kingdom is governed by Her Majesty's Government in the name of the Queen." (*Britain. An Official Handbook*, H.M.S.O. 1965.) Stripped of its verbiage this means that despite all the traditional bull, the Queen is merely a rubber stamp.

In this respect the Royal Family provide a glaring example of the redundancy and strictly parasitic nature of the capitalist class in general. Not only do they perform no useful social function but they do not even have to defend their own class interests. Most capitalists choose not to go into politics, and a large part of managing capitalism is willingly undertaken by political careerists from the working class.

Ambassadors

Now it has been argued that the Monarchy does perform a useful function on the grounds that a Monarch can create more good-will the world over than a mere president. Philip and Elizabeth, it is said, are worth their weight in gold as unofficial British ambassadors. But what do their lengthy

foreign tours, with all their enormous expense, really achieve? Good-will soon gets flattened under the steam-roller of political reality, as numerous conflicts within the Commonwealth have shown. The fact that both India and Pakistan owe some sort of allegiance to the same monarch does not prevent them from tearing each other's guts out. And even the great love which the Europeans are reputed to have for Her Britannic Majesty could not get Britain into the Common Market.

But even if it is conceded that these ambassadorial missions have a certain measure of success, that the foreigners warm to us and as a result are more inclined to Buy British—what relevance does this have for those of us whose lives are taken up in earning enough to go on living? It simply means that the wealth which we produce but our employers own may be more easily disposed of on the world's markets—without this necessarily benefiting us in any way. Thus if the Royal Family can be said to have any function at all, it is that of being public relations officers for the British capitalist class. The latter, after all, are the only people who have anything to sell abroad.

Finance

As for the "reward" (one could hardly call it wages) which members of the Royal Family get for going on long holidays and reading an occasion speech, it certainly proves them to be worth their weight in sterling. The Civil List, the amount of money given every year to the Royal Family, is made up as follows:

The privy purse of the Queen	£60,000
Duke of Edinburgh	£40,000
Queen Mother	£70,000
Duke of Gloucester	£35,000
Princess Margaret	£15,000
Salaries of Royal Household	£185,000
Household Expenses	£121,800
Alms and bounty	£13,200
Supplementary provision	£95,000
TOTAL:	£635,000

(*Statesman's Year Book*, 1965/6).

It would perhaps be more fitting if members of the Royal Family stood up for the rest of the population when the National Anthem is played, to show that they appreciate such benevolence. They are given more every year than most of us earn in a lifetime, and in effect they are guaranteed an annual pools win without even filling in a coupon.

As if this were not enough Sir Charles Petrie, in a bigoted apology for the institution of the monarchy (*The Modern British Monarchy*), laments that certain ladies of the high aristocracy are not included in the list of annual pensions and are forced to "sell their trinkets at Sotheby's." He is quite blind to the fact that most non-aristocratic ladies haven't got a single trinket they would be able to sell at Sotheby's, nor will they ever save enough to be able to buy one. In essence his statement contains the same absurdity as one made recently by another Royalist: "The Royal Family are really quite poor, you know. They have so many palaces to maintain."

A second bogus point which Sir Charles borrows from *The Times* and uses in his book is that since the Exchequer receives more in taxes from the Royal Family than it pays

out for the Civil List, "the nation makes a profit out of the Royal Family." Here again the argument conveniently ignores one side of the facts. For example, we should hardly feel it was the whole truth to say that the nation makes a profit out of someone like Charles Clore on the grounds that he pays taxes and receives no annual pension. We would conclude, naturally, that he must be receiving from somewhere even larger amounts of money than he pays in taxes. And since he is not a member of the employed class his income must be from shares, interest, property and the like.

Moreover, it is quite wrong to say that taxes are a profit of the "nation" in the sense of the majority of people in the country. The taxes go to the government, which uses them in a variety of ways to support and maintain the capitalist machine.

We can only assume that this is the case with the Royal Family, whose income derives from their vast estates and property. This brings us back to our first point: the Royal Family, with all the special and unique features we have considered, are members of the socially superfluous capitalist class.

Changing attitude

What, now, of current attitudes to this archaic institution in an archaic form of society? The satire we noted earlier is perhaps symptomatic of a more critical and sceptical view with regard to royalism. Most of us have been caught up in the stampedes out of the cinema at closing time and some circuits have given up playing the National Anthem at all.

Such attitudes are preferable to an unquestioning reverence, but they do not go nearly far enough. They do not point the way to any effective form of action; they amount at

most to grudging resentment, and at their most innocuous merely to condescending amusement. This is inevitably the case as long as one institution of capitalism is considered in isolation from the rest of society.

For this reason there is no reason to support republicans, who want to abolish the monarchy in favour of an elected head of state such as a president. Presidents command as much extravagant luxury as kings, and top politicians pig themselves to the same excessive extent as Henry VIII (See the photos of the Lord Mayor's Banquet any year). In short, as long as there is a ruling and a subject class, the top ranks of society will always enjoy the same order of privileges.

Conclusion

Men have come a long way since they believed that Royal Privilege was divinely given, but they have not yet realised that this and every other kind of privilege rests in the last analysis on the private ownership of the means of life.

When they do realise this and take the necessary steps to establish common ownership of and free access to wealth (and that won't be until you do), then there will consequently cease to be classes, ranks and hierarchies in society. There will be no Your Majesties, Your Graces or Your Honours, and any respect which individuals command will be based entirely on their merits as useful contributors to the worldwide co-operative community.

Finally, to those people who anxiously ask "What would happen to the Queen in socialism?" We can only say this: as we have shown, she would cease to be a queen and a member of the capitalist class. The only person who can give you more information than that is Elizabeth Mountbatten.

K. GRAHAM.

WHAT IS PATRIOTISM ?

This noble impulse of social solidarity is the common inheritance of all mankind. But being a powerful social force it has lent itself to exploitation. Therefore with the development of class rule this great impulse is made subordinate to the class interests of the rulers. It becomes debased and perverted to definite anti-social ends. As soon as the people become a slave class "the land of their fathers" is theirs no more. Patriotism to them becomes a fraudulent thing. The "country" is that of their masters alone. Nevertheless, the instinct of loyalty to the community is too deep-seated to be eradicated so easily, and it becomes a deadly weapon in the hands of the rulers against the people themselves.

Capitalism, therefore, stands as the barrier to the destruction of which will not only set free the productive forces of society for the good of all, but will also liberate human solidarity and brotherhood from the narrow confines of nationality and patriotism. Only victorious labour can make true the simple but pregnant statement: "mankind are my brethren, the world is my country." Patriot-

ism and nationalism as we know them will then be remembered only as artificial restrictions of men's sympathy and mutual help; as obstacles to the expansion of the human mind; as impediments to the needful and helpful development of human unity and co-operation; as bonds that bind men to slavery; as incentives that set brothers at each others' throats.

Despite its shameless perversion by a robber class the great impulse to human solidarity is by no means dead. Economic factors give it an ever firmer basis, and in the Socialist movement it develops apace. Even the hellish system of individualism, with its doctrine of every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost, has been unable to kill it. And in the great class struggle of the workers against the drones, of the socially useful against the socially pernicious, in this last great struggle for the liberation of humanity from wage slavery, the great principle of human solidarity, based upon the necessities of to-day and impelled by the deep-seated instincts of the race, will come to full fruition and win its supreme historical battle.

From SOCIALIST STANDARD, December, 1915

CENTRAL LONDON MEETINGS

A reminder that the Bloomsbury Branch Sunday evening meetings are being held at the Asquith Room, 2 Soho Square, London, W.1 (close to Tottenham Court Road Tube Station). The series of lectures is very interesting, the room warm and comfortable—a well-worth Sunday evening venue for members and friends. As with all Party meetings, questions and discussion are welcome. So please note the dates and time—7.30 pm for 8 pm. and bring as many friends as possible.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ATLAS OF SOVIET AFFAIRS
by R. N. Taaffe & R. C. Kingsbury
Methuen, 7s. 6d.

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Heil Banda!

The tireless supporters of African nationalist movements will doubtless have been glad to hear that Dr. Hastings Banda, who was once one of their heroes, and who was once said to be a gentle, humane man, and who is now Prime Minister of Malawi, is running true to form.

Next July, Malawi will become a Republic and Dr. Banda's party—the Malawi Congress Party—is getting ready for the event.

First, they nominated (who else?) Dr. Banda as their candidate for the Presidency. Then they accepted some proposals which make it clear that Dr. Banda does not intend his Presidential rule to be restricted by the sort of checks which are on the leaders of a much maligned, imperialist country like the United States.

The Constitution the Malawi Congress Party accepted, and which will probably become law, lays it down that the

country will become a one-party state with a President who is both the Head of State and the Head of the Government.

There are, of course, no prizes for guessing which party will be the only one allowed to exist and who will be the all-powerful President—or dictator, as he will be known in places where speech is still comparatively free.

This is typical of many of the new African states which are now under one-party dictatorships, run by the men who came to power on a promise to bring freedom to a people governed by a foreign nation.

On what grounds are the new dictatorships excused? Dr. Banda told his party's convention: "It does not matter whether there is a dictator or not as long as the people choose the dictator"—which is exactly the argument used by, among others, Adolf Hitler.

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This is not a far-fetched parallel. A couple of weeks after the convention, Dr. Banda revealed what sort of dictatorship he hopes the Malawi people will choose. Commenting on the trial of the "rebel" Medson Silombela, he said: "I know he is going to be found guilty. What sort of judge can acquit him? After that you can come and watch him swing."

Life under British capitalism is tough enough, but at least political leaders do not make it their business to go around pronouncing verdict and sentence before a trial is ended.

The rising capitalsisms of Africa are no better than those of the older, more established countries.

The experience of Malawi—and of Ghana and Kenya—should be remembered, the next time there is an appeal to support a nationalist movement which aims to replace one type of suppression with another.

Failure of the incomes and prices policy

"Mr. Brown," wrote William Rees-Mogg in the *Sunday Times* last April, "Plough the Sands." He was referring to the government's incomes policy, to the incomes policies which have gone before, and to the near-certainty of Brown's policy failing.

Well, the policy has been running for about a year. We have had the Declaration of Intent, we have Mr. Jones and his Prices and Incomes Board, we have the Early Warning System and the TUC's capitulation to it.

And we have Mr. Brown. Talking.

What else have we had?

Prices, we know, have gone up. What about wages?

The Motor Agents' Association have agreed with the Amalgamated Engineering Union and the Transport and General Workers' Union that from January 1st the basic rates of about 300,000 workers in the motor retail and repair trades will go up by between 14 and 16 per cent.

Figures are pliable things but on any argument this rise is considerably more than the government's hoped-for limit of between 3 and 3½ per cent. a year.

This is only one detail in the picture. In April the Scottish plumbers got a rise

of 11 per cent.; in August Trustee Savings Bank Staff got 8.1 per cent.

Between last December and September this year, the Index of Hourly Wage Rates, taking a base figure of 100 for the year 1956, rose from 152.2 to 160.2—an increase of 8 per cent.

These developments have provoked Mr. Callaghan, the Chancellor of the Exchequer to confess that he is "... disappointed with the way in which the incomes policy has gone so far."

There is really no reason for Mr. Callaghan feeling like this. Any incomes policy will always run up against a basic feature of the capitalist social system which the government are trying to run.

Capitalism imposes upon the mass of people the condition that they have to sell their working abilities in order to live. In its barest essentials—that is, in times of slump—this is a matter of living. At other times it is more a matter of defending and improving living standards.

Here is the root cause of the disputes over wages and working conditions. It is inevitable that the working class will struggle to get the most they can from their employers, and that their employers will protect their own interests.

Since the war, conditions in this country have generally favoured the

working class in their struggle. A persistent shortage of labour has given strength to many wage claims.

Thus, although the trade unions may formally accept an obligation to restrain wages, the very conditions of their existence force them to do the opposite, for their members would hardly agree to hold wages down when they could push them up.

The assistant secretary of the TGWU showed how the trade unions justify themselves in this situation when he commented on the rises awarded to the motor men: "In fact, this was consolidating local wage rates into a national agreement and was merely formalising what already existed."

This is what Mr. George Woodcock once called "a bit of good old TUC", but in essence it is a fairly common sort of statement.

Whatever policy the government may try to impose, and the unions accept, the battle to consolidate and to improve wages will go on. It is simply part of capitalism.

Other incomes policies have failed in the past and Brown's policy, brought in to such deafening fanfares, is failing now. However many times they are ploughed, the dead sands will remain.

Crisis in Rhodesia

The crisis in Rhodesia showed—if indeed it was necessary to do so—that whatever else we may be short of there is still plenty of nonsense being talked.

We heard, for example, talk about our "kith and kin" in Rhodesia, which suggests that there is a sacred, family tie between British workers and the Rhodesian ruling class. Perhaps this propaganda was effective: it was reported that the British government hesitated about sending troops to Rhodesia because they feared something like a repetition of the Curraugh Mutiny in 1914.

We heard lots about the "rights" of majorities and the "legalities" of Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence, as if such things are immutable and are not ignored and defied when it suits a government's purposes to do so. Human "rights" have had such a rough time of it during the past few years that it is surprising that any government still dares to speak in their name.

And, of course, we had the familiar racist nonsense, about the supposed inferiority of the African, and his inherent inability to behave in the same way as the established proletariat of the older capitalist countries.

There were signs that the decision to make a UDI was not reached without considerable argument in Salisbury. Mr. Smith prevaricated for a long time, after originally giving the impression that the

break was due in the immediate future.

Perhaps this was a result of the arm-twisting by the British government. But whatever the short term effect of the sanctions, there is every reason to think that in the long run Rhodesia will weather the storm. It will find other outlets for its produce, and reach other arrangements on its international finances to replace those which have been ended. Indeed, there may even be some sort of tie-up between Rhodesia and some of the Negro African states. Malawi for one made it clear that it did not favour the imposition of sanctions, which might mean that the two countries will get together over a trade deal.

Mr. Wilson was at some pains to establish the fact that Labour's policy was a continuation of the Tories'. This did not prevent Mr. Heath getting what advantage he could from the situation, by making the familiar charge that, although there was no difference in principle between the two parties, Labour were bungling the job.

This basic agreement indicates that the British ruling class as a whole, whatever Lord Salisbury may think, realises what will be the result of a UDI. The present Rhodesian government can probably stay in power only by imposing a system similar to what exists in South Africa.

This will have its repercussions in terms of sabotage and other forms of violence, and in continual unrest. It will

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hold back Rhodesia's development into a modern capitalist nation. This may suit the interests of the Rhodesian farmers, but the country's industrialists, and the capitalists abroad who have money invested there, must take a different attitude.

They are more likely to be in favour of accepting the inevitable and salvaging what they can, as they have done in the other newly independent states of Africa.

If a Negro-dominated Rhodesia is inevitable—however far into the future it maybe—what is likely to follow? There will probably by changes in the white landholdings. Some of them may be split up and distributed to Africans; so called Land Reform often accompanies the success of nationalist revolts.

There will also be changes in Rhodesia's social structure. The tribal chiefs will decline in power, to be replaced by a new ruling class, mostly with coloured skins. The African people will be developed into a fully-fledged proletariat.

And, if recent history is any guide, Rhodesia may well become another Negro dictatorship, with the new government's opponents persecuted, exiled, even murdered.

Who can say that this is preferable to the white settlers' dictatorship under Mr. Smith? For the people of Rhodesia the outlook is unpromising.

PROFIT IN RUSSIA: A POSTSCRIPT

Those who have been following the discussion of this question in our columns may be interested in two further pieces of information. The first is another article by Liberman, in the *Sunday Times* of October 10th. As to the origin of profits Liberman repeats the same incorrect arguments he gave to the *Daily Worker* correspondent. But there are two passages worth comment.

Arguing against the suggestion that Russia is "returning" to profit-making, he points out:

"Our enterprises have been driving for cash profits since 1921, that is, for more than 40 years."

Quite! Since it developed there, capitalism has never ceased to exist in Russia. For most of this period, however, cash profits played a minor role in regulating production. Liberman complains:

"The significance of profit in the Soviet Union was reduced because the law of value was ignored to a certain extent. This law was incorrectly interpreted by certain Soviet economists as a sort of unpleasant hang-over of capitalism which supposedly had to be got rid of as quickly as possible."

Naturally the law of value will disappear in socialist society, where production will be for use. Marxian terminology, which by a peculiar historical accident had been inherited by the rulers of Russia, has proved a nuisance to them on this point. At first their theoreticians argued that the law of value would continue to exist in the transition from capitalism to socialism but would wither away before the advent of socialism. These are the economists Liberman criticises. This was changed in the early 1940's when it was baldly announced that in future

the law of value would continue to operate in a socialist society! Liberman is merely a product of this change: perhaps he genuinely doesn't know that the Marxian concepts he uses apply exclusively to capitalist society.

The second item is from *The Times* of October 18th under the headline LOANS TO REPLACE GRANTS IN RUSSIA. Garbuzov, the Finance Minister, suggested, says the report:

"financing a substantial share of the nation's investment, possibly as much as half, by long-term bank loans instead of outright interest-free grants out of the Government budget as in the past."

This change by encouraging the State enterprises to make enough profit to be able to pay the interest charges would bring the financing of the nationalised industries in Russia nearer to the British system.

A.L.B.

The passing show

You and your job

Have you what is commonly known as a "good job"—one that has "gd. sal. to right person and excel. condns." as the small ads put it? Even if you can answer yes to this, even if you are one of the more highly paid workers today, it's still a pretty certain bet that you have a struggle to get by at whatever standard of living you are accustomed to and are expected to maintain. And because you are a worker, you will always have to count the pennies at some stage or other before you can have things which you may particularly need. "Consumers choice" is a pretty empty term under these circumstances—the restriction of choice begins in your pocket, not in the shop window.

But accepting that we all live a pretty narrow sort of life with drabness and insecurity in varying degrees according to size of pay packet, what do you really think of your job? By that I mean just what do you think of the *work* that you have to do, the duties and responsibilities that it entails? If we are again to judge by the small ads columns, there is no such thing as a dull, monotonous, boring job; "interesting work" is always their claim, but they are usually careful to add "gd. hours", which is a hint of what they really think of the mental attraction of the job. They know that no one will want to stick at it a second longer than necessary and that come knocking-off time, the factory or office will be deserted within minutes. And although many workers do work overtime, it's not generally out of love for their work, but because of the extra cash.

Before the war, when jobs were scarce, you just had to put up with the monotony and make the best of it, but in a time of labour shortage like the present, this is one (but only one) of the factors which make for frequent job changes, particularly among younger workers. One young man still in his twenties was recently reported as having had some *hundreds* of jobs since leaving school. Despite the reformer's prattle about "opportunities for youth", the essential conditions of capitalism—the division of labour and the worker's divorce from ownership of the means of production—will throw up this problem more and more as time goes by.

These thoughts are prompted by a small cutting from *The Guardian* of October 14th. Mr. J. E. Newton,

general secretary of the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers, has drawn attention to this very problem. He thinks that workers are getting less and less satisfaction from their jobs and wants Mr. Brown to set up a ministry of industrial psychology "to find out what workers think of their jobs" and "try to redirect personal interest to the workplace or provide the means for obtaining other satisfactions outside work." Without wishing to be rude to Mr. Newton, I think we could well be spared yet another government ministry, especially of psychology (what a horrible thought). And why does he want an investigation to find out what he seems pretty certain of already, anyway?

But his other proposal is interesting. I think it suggests that he does not have much hope of workers ever being able to get fulfilment from their jobs. Indeed, he admits by implication that the search for it outside of working hours is here to stay, and of course he's quite correct. I should say that it will last as long as capitalism; in fact, catering for pastimes and sports has become an industry in itself. Many of us have hobbies of one sort or another and we often work harder at them than we do at our jobs. Others vent their frustrations on old ladies, telephone kiosks and railway carriage upholstery—a particularly ugly trend which is really just the other side of the same coin.

In a Socialist World . . . ?

Yes, you have a right to ask that question. In a Socialist world we would work, but work would take on a new meaning. It would not be synonymous with employment, which is merely the means of getting a living wage, but since it would aim at the full satisfaction of people's needs, it would be also a way of expressing and developing ourselves to the fullest extent. True we would work to live because that is essential in any society, but we would also live to work. I should think that monotony and frustration would be well-nigh impossible under such conditions, not least of all because the heavy specialisation demanded by capitalism would disappear. And we won't need any psychologists to try and teach us how to kid ourselves we're happy when we're anything but.

An Old Story

My father is an old age pensioner and belongs to the local old age pensioners

association. The other day he handed me a copy of *Pensioner's Voice*, the official publication of the National Federation of O.A.P. Associations. "We speak for the older generation," says the caption at top right on the front page, and it's a good job that somebody speaks for them, but let's see how effectively *Pensioner's Voice* manages to do this.

Right off, it denies any political affiliations and claims it has always advised its members to "support any candidate who will support us." Now that should pose quite a question. After all, you have only the election address and speeches of your candidates to go by and the one who does not promise support for the pensioners must be a rarity indeed. You could of course try eliminating from your support list those who had a poor record on the pensions question, but then that would mean eliminating the lot if you were really honest with yourself.

Actually, I was struck by the naivete of this journal. The National Federation was formed twenty-five years ago and represents millions who have a lifetime's experience of working class existence behind them. Yet it still puts the view that Parliament is an impartial body—taken as a whole—and that "all the political parties should be willing and anxious to see that justice is done." Now let us assume you are a pensioner and acted on the Federation's advice during the last election. Perhaps you voted Labour, in which case on Page 3, you will find the Rev. T. E. Nuttall complaining *vide* the government's national plan, that:—

... We cannot find anything in the white paper about the electoral promise on an entirely new policy to provide an adequate income for each pensioner . . .

Pensioner's Voice has an interesting editorial comment comparing the lot of a £4 a week pensioner with that of a shareholder in I.C.I. It mentions that their £50 millions capital issue in early September was heavily over-subscribed. Not only was this a well written commentary on the glaring inequality that is capitalism, but by this very comparison the writer spotlighted the indignity which is built into working class existence. Yet is there any real questioning of such a world, or even the faintest spark of anger? Not at all. Just a pathetic appeal to put "all hands to the pumps to make his (the pensioner's) life

(continued bottom next page)

Africa

The Study of Africa

by Peter J. M. McEwan and Robert B. Sutcliffe
Methuen 42s.

The vast continent of Africa—5,000 miles from the Mediterranean to the Cape, and 4,600 miles from Senegal to Somalia—is changing rapidly. More rapidly in fact than any other part of the world. It needs to move fast if it is going to catch up with the old-established Capitalist states; it has got a very long way to go.

Africa was the last great area to be conquered and exploited by the European powers. For centuries the settlements were largely coastal, trading posts for trade with the interior, virtual ports for ships bound for the Orient, and, of course, depots for that most profitable of commodities, slaves. Not until well into the 19th century

The passing show, from page 192

a bit easier."

In looking at the pensioner's movement in Britain over the last few years I have noted this attitude, which runs like a thread through its literature. Always it is an appeal, rather than a demand, for better income and social services. Granted that old workers do not have the same vigour to push their interests as youngsters have, but the really big factor behind their failure is their lack of bargaining power because they are now out of the production line. This is the biggest slap in the face that capitalism gives them.

So to them, the need for Socialism should be of particular interest, and it is especially sad that many of them will die without ever having considered it.

Gaspers

"... We are under the constant survey of foreign friends... Any back sliding on our part, which lays us open to accusations that we are... putting social needs before financial responsibility, would very quickly cause the leaves on the plant of confidence to shrivel." (Lord Cromer, 21/10/65)

"It is a remarkable thing how in the last quarter of a century the doctrine of Socialism as a way of life... is everywhere, even in Russia, thoroughly discredited." (Lord Shawcross, ex-Minister in the 1945 Labour Government, 4/11/65)

"One MP suggested the skinning alive of hanged men and the use of their skulls as beer pots." (The *Guardian*, 11/11/65, reporting the debate in the Malawi Parliament on the Penal Code Amendment Bill)

E.T.C.

did the Europeans really move in, so that the work of industrialising or exterminating tribal peoples has not progressed as far as in the Americas or Australasia.

Many areas of Africa have had only about sixty years of colonialism, and millions of people still live a tribal existence away from the industrial areas and modern communications. Non-European Capitalists are still rather small in number, but they are growing, and display all the vulgar ostentation associated with the newly rich. It is on them that the job of breaking tribal barriers, and producing an industrial proletariat, will fall.

With so much happening in so vast an area, Africa is somewhat baffling, and poses a mass of questions. Why was the continent late in being exploited? Why have so many African States gone totalitarian? *The Study of Africa* is a useful textbook on this subject. It describes the physical environment, the historical development, and the contemporary scene. Why, for example, has the southern part of the continent developed in a different way to the rest?

"The nationalism of East and Central Africa was handicapped in a way that the West was not: namely, by the presence of large numbers of white settlers. The climate and land of the area were more conducive to European farming and consequent settlement."

It was these settlers, basically farmers rather than traders, or exploiters of mineral wealth, that built up a large white population, large enough to enable them to keep their grip on the State machine. This has been brought to the forefront again in the last few weeks by Rhodesia.

The book is well served with maps and appendices.

L. DALE

The universe

The Fabric of the Heavens

by Toulmin and Goodchild, Pelican Books 6s.

This is the first of four books in a connected series entitled *The Ancestry of Science*. It is a book of interest to socialists for the authors view of history is akin to the Materialist Conception of History, and they have applied it to the development of astronomy and dynamics. "... a man can do in his own time only a job which is there to be done; but there may be many different ways in which he can do it." Although they raise this point with reference to Isaac Newton, their whole work is evidence of this development within history from the Babylonians through to modern times.

They contrast this view of history with the deterministic "the acts of historical

drama will follow one another of the same general sequence regardless of what actor takes any particular part" and the concept of the great men who "leap far ahead of their times, forcing thought along genuinely new and creative paths."

The Babylonians commenced the study of astronomy not merely for religious forecasting—the celestial bodies were regarded as gods, but because within their empire there were many different calendar systems based upon the sun or the moon and "commercial and official business alike called for a more predictable and uniform calendar." They collected observations over many centuries in order to improve their celestial forecasting, which they did with great accuracy, but apparently without any attempt to explain the sequence of the events they observed.

The Greeks were later to speculate on the causes of what the Babylonians had observed. Greece before 300 B.C. was unlike Babylon in that it was not an area of order and stability, and it was "a meeting point for different cultures." This situation led to a minority, often unpopular, making critical speculation concerning nature, politics, religion, etc., a speculation which was to lead to theories, many of which contained ideas to be developed later in Western Europe.

The unification of Greece commenced the decline in the spread of science. The paths of mathematics and astronomy began to diverge, the study of physics declined—"By A.D. 200, astrology had recovered all the ground that it had ever lost, and had effectively displaced rational astrophysics." The reasons were political, social, economic and religious. This decline had such an effect that the last questions of Ptolemy were the first to be asked by Copernicus some thirteen centuries later, that is after fifteen centuries of Christendom. The authors show that members of the church often critically analysed concepts of the heavens, despite the fact that dogma had to be accepted.

The authors give considerable evidence that the ideas of Copernicus, Galileo, Newton and many others were milestones in the developing understanding of the universe, but assert that their ideas were expected developments from previous knowledge, and arose out of the problems confronting students of astronomy and physics in their times.

Inability to find an adequate explanation of the universe long led men to think that "divine revelation alone could give certainty." But in the eighteenth century men thought that Newton had revealed "true laws for good. His theories seemed certain, correct, final. Later logical doubts and perplexities began to arise."

When men solve problems it will often appear that their solutions are final. A problem has been removed, but neither nature nor society remain constant; new problems arise, the study of which extends

BOOKS

man's knowledge.

According to the authors "the progress of science always involves a delicate balance between critical observation and speculative theorising — between careful piecemeal investigation of particular problems and imaginative general interpretation of the results obtained."

In capitalist society, in the fields of the natural sciences, it is possible to observe critically, to make speculative imaginative interpretations, but in the social sciences capitalist society, assuming itself to be correct and final, restricts scientific enquiry. Progress in social enquiry is prevented because the class nature of society and its consequences are ignored.

Freedom of enquiry in the natural sciences will continue under capitalist society, and astrophysics will not be an exception, for developments can usually be put to commercial advantage. Enquiry into the social and economic field will be encouraged only if it accepts capitalist society and aids commercial development, for example, market analysis or industrial psychology. Only Socialists can study problems of capitalist society uninhibited with ideas of its permanence. We alone are able to rebut the theories of capitalist social sciences—often from their own evidence. They stand condemned when comparison is made with the advances in the natural sciences in the past two hundred years, from canal to space travel, and yet in the social field the problems of poverty, insecurity, housing, etc., remain.

These problems arise out of the nature of capitalism and cannot be removed until society is changed. When that is done, and Socialism is established, the social sciences will be as free and unrestricted as are the natural sciences in their respective fields of study.

K.K.

Immigration

Immigration and Race in British Politics
by Paul Foot, *Penguin Special*.

Paul Foot, a journalist for the *Sunday Telegraph* and also the editor of the semi-trotskyist *Labour Worker*, has written a very useful account of immigration and race in British politics. In this book can be found facts on Griffiths' campaign in Smethwick, on reactions to the past Irish and Jewish immigration control, on the campaign and final success of those pressing for immigration control in the Conservative and Labour Parties, on anti-immigrant organisations like the British National Party, the New Liberals of Islington and the various Immigration Control Associations in the Birmingham area. The reaction of the so-called Communist Party to the influx of Polish refugees after the war is recalled. Incidentally, a similar attitude was adopted towards the later Hungarian refugees with the *Daily Worker* using the old technique of over-reporting crimes committed by Hungarians. One striking omission is any reference to the black racialist organisations which try to channel the frustrations of coloured people caused by capitalism against "the White man."

As Paul Foot has elsewhere declared himself in favour of "international socialism" we are perhaps justified in criticising his solutions severely from this point of view.

Socialists hold that the many social problems which people face today arise from the fact that they own nothing but their ability to work which they must sell for wages in order to live. Capitalism, based as it is on wage-labour and production for profit, is the root cause of the problems which arise over housing, education, work and health. Colour and other kinds of prejudice result mainly from the competition and general

insecurity of wage and salary workers under Capitalism which make conspicuous minorities obvious scapegoats for social frustrations and ills.

In this book Paul Foot tends to blame these social problems not on the economic system but on what the government does or does not do. He speaks of the slander of those who blame

"the immigrant himself for the social problems resulting from Government neglect."

The answer to government neglect, says Mr. Foot, is obviously government action. So, after pointing out that colour prejudice arises from the frustrations of modern life, he says:

"The main task of government is to remove the root cause of this 'displaced aggression': to end the shortages which so cramp the lives of working people."

It is difficult to work out if Paul Foot really believes this as in the no doubt less inhibiting pages of the magazine *International Socialism* (No. 22) he writes that such shortages are

"entirely due to an economic system which produces wealth for the benefit and superiority of a class."

In other words they are not due to "Government neglect" and if the economic system is the cause then the only solution can be to remove it and not to appeal to the government. Paul Foot is deluding himself if he really believes that action by the capitalist State, whether managed by Labour or Conservative, can solve the problem of colour prejudice. Even if we accept that government action could have some marginal effect this would only be tinkering with the problem.

A.L.B.

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LETTERS

Socialism

In the Declaration of Principles it is stated "... the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government . . ." and "The SPGB, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties . . ." You also rightly criticise the Labour Government for administering capitalism rather than attempting Socialism.

But how would the SPGB, given a majority in Parliament and support in the country comparable with the Labour Government, attempt to alter the means of production from Capitalist to Socialist in the face of opposition from the vested capitalist interests?

And if this country, or any other, was changed into a Socialist community, on what basis would it attempt to trade and keep relations with the non-Socialist world?

P. R. MORRIS, London, S.E.24.

REPLY

A Labour Government administers capitalism for the simple reason that it cannot do anything else. The Labour Party is an organisation which stands for the reform, and not the abolition, of capitalism; it asks for votes to run capitalism and when it is in power it cannot exceed this mandate, even supposing that it had the knowledge and the desire to do so.

The Labour Party does not care about the consciousness—or the lack of it—which is behind the votes which sends it to power. Just like any other capitalist political party, it will accept any support as long as it can achieve its main object of becoming the government.

That is why the Labour Party cannot "attempt" to establish Socialism; indeed, no political party can do this. Socialism cannot be imposed by a minority of political leaders; it will come only as the result of a conscious action by the world working class. This action will be backed by the knowledge of what Socialism is and how it must be established. When the working class have this knowledge, they will elect Socialist delegates with a mandate to take all necessary steps to end the capitalist social system and to replace it with Socialism. Because of the knowledge of the people who have elected them, the delegates will have no power to do other than they have been instructed. This will be a massive, universal movement—it will not and cannot be confined to any one country or group of countries.

Socialism will mean the end of the private ownership of the means of wealth production. It will, therefore, also mean the end of trading, both national and international. There will be no separate nations to compete against, and to bargain with, each

other. Society's wealth will move freely over the world, from the places where it is produced to the places where it is needed. The entire operation will be governed by human needs, in every sense of the term.

The entire structure of capitalism—including its "vested interests"—exists only because the working class wills it so. It is the working class who man the forces of coercion and who regularly vote the representatives of capitalism into the seats of power. It is the working class who organise and administer the capitalist social system, from one end to the other. When they realise that they can run society in their own interests, when they decide to take away the power and privilege of the ruling class and to establish Socialism, there will be nothing which could stop them.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE.

From Trinidad

Things in Trinidad are warming up. Elections are next year and so far we have four political parties in the fray. The P.N.M. (People's National Movement) under the leadership of Dr. Eric Williams, is still the hot favourite to continue, while the D.L.P. (Democratic Labour Party) is losing ground. Although still officially the Opposition, it is led by London-based Dr. Capildeo. A comparatively new party, the Liberals, led by Mr. Farquhar, is gaining what the D.L.P. is losing, and the last-formed party, the

Farmers and Workers Party, is led by Mr. C. L. R. James.

Earlier this year the Government passed a Bill aimed at curbing strikes. The Bill is known as the Industrial Stabilisation Act (I.S.A.). The Prime Minister announced there were too many strikes in the country, which interfered with the economy and frightened away foreign or would-be investors, so therefore the Bill is justified. This Act has curtailed the functions of the Trade Unions, as all disputes must go to the Industrial Court for its ruling. There is no appeal against judgment and since all those taking part in strike action in any way can be jailed for long periods, the Trade Unions have got their tails between their legs. As a result the various Unions are divided on the issue, some for the Act, others against it. The trick of the capitalists to divide the working class is self-evident. On the scene at this time is Mr. C. L. R. James, who contends that the I.S.A. is a violation not only of the Constitution, but of the rights of the workers, who are reduced to nothing but slaves. He is joined by Mr. G. Weekes, President-General of the powerful oil workers' Union, and slowly other Union leaders are following. The Unions have now obtained the services of Mr. Platt-Mills, Q.C., to challenge the validity of the I.S.A. in the light of the Constitution.

To a Socialist one thing is clear. Whatever the outcome—the workers will have nothing to gain.

CORBIE, Trinidad.

FOR THE RECORD

The record of the twists and turns of the so-called communist parties throughout the world are well-known to those who bother to study working-class political history. In view of the prominence currently given to the colour problem both here and in America it will be useful to recall one incident in the history of the American party. It is taken from a review in the *Weekly People* (September 13th, 1958) of New York of *The American Communist Party: A Critical History (1919-1957)* by Irving Howe and Lewis Coser.

In the 1930's the American party went all out to get Negro support using as a bait the fantastic demand for "self-determination in the Black Belt."

"World War II changed also this. In September of 1941, Benjamin Davis, soon to become a prominent Negro Communist, wrote that 'the CP is disturbed by the increasing struggle of Negroes for jobs in defence plants. (Authors' italics). The CP dissolved its Southern branches (those that did not exist solely on paper) during the war in order to mollify the Southern wing of the Democratic Party by show-

ing its zeal to help prosecute the war with no 'dissension' in the South.

Another bit of CP history from the mass of material presented by Coser and Howe deserves to be included here. The authors describe it as 'one of those peculiarly symptomatic incidents that reveal more than any number of party documents.' In 1945, four Negro WAC's at Fort Devens discovered a group of wounded Negro soldiers who had been left unattended. When they complained to the camp authorities, the Army's answer was a court-martial!

"The protests from all sides were so vigorous that the Army reversed its decision. This reversal, which brought some satisfaction to those with normal feelings of good will and a sense of fair play, brought only pain to Ben Davis. In the *Daily Worker* of April 8th, 1945, the official organ of the CP, he reprimanded the WAC's for disturbing the Communist hoped-for serenity of the domestic scene.

"The US general staff has on many occasions . . . proved that they deserve their full confidence of the Negro people . . . We cannot temporarily stop the war until all questions of discrimination are ironed out!"

Meetings

HEAD OFFICE

A series of lectures and discussions at
52 Clapham High Street, London
SW4

Thursdays 8 pm

At the following meeting a representative of the Salvation Army will provide the main speaker. A member of the SPGB will reply from the platform followed by questions and discussion.

December 2nd
SALVATION ARMY

December 9th and 16th
FILM THE GERMAN STORY
Commentary by H. Weaver

LEWISHAM

Davenport Hall (Co-op), 1 Davenport Road, Rushley Green, SE6
Mondays 8 pm

December 6th
THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT

December 13th
THE TORY OPPOSITION

PADDINGTON & MARYLEBONE
The Royal Oak, York Street, W1
(near Marylebone Road)
Wednesday 9 pm

December 1st
THE LITERATURE OF THE MARXIAN SCHOOL
Speaker: S. Goldstein

December 8th
A review of the
December Socialist Standard

December 15th
SOCIALIST IDENTITY
Speaker: F. James

December 22nd
BRANCH SOCIAL

KIDDERMINSTER
Station Inn, Farfield
Comberton Road
Wednesdays 7.30 pm

December 8th
Discussion:
How to establish Socialism?

January 12th
SOCIALISM & EDUCATION
Speaker: K. Knight

GLASGOW MEETINGS

Woodside Public Halls
Sundays 7.30 pm
"BOOKS OF OUR TIMES"

December 5th

THE WASTE MAKERS
Speaker: A. Webster

December 12th

NEWS FROM NOWHERE
Speaker: V. Vanni

December 19th

SCOURGE OF THE SWASTIKA
Speaker: R. Russell

December 26th

HONEST TO GOD
Speaker: A. Shaw

GLASGOW STUDY CLASSES

Thursdays 8 pm, Branch Rooms
163a Berkeley Street

GROUP 2—

"BARRIERS TO SOCIALISM"

December 2nd

ANARCHISM

December 9th

INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

December 16th

ANTI-PARLIAMENTARIANS

January 6th, 1966

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December 5th

THE WASTE MAKERS
Speaker: C. May

December 12th

SPIRITUALISM
Speaker: J. Law

December 19th

**HOW THE SCOTTISH
HIGHLANDS WERE WON
FOR CAPITALISM**
Speaker: A. W. Edgar

January 2nd, 1966

IRISH REBELS and their causes
Speaker: A. Fahy

January 9th

**The current situation
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Speaker: K. Knight

HACKNEY

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December 8th

MEN & MACHINES
Speaker: D. Zucconi

December 15th

THE GERMAN STORY
Speaker: H. Weaver

LONDON OUTDOOR MEETINGS

Sundays

Hyde Park, 3 and 6 pm
East Street, Walworth
December 5th and 26th (noon)
December 12th (11 am)
December 19th (1 pm)

Mondays

Lincoln's Inn Fields, 1-2 pm

Wednesdays

Charing Cross Tube Station
(Villiers Street) 8 pm

Thursdays

Tower Hill, 12.30-2 pm
Earls Court, 8 pm
Bromley Library, 8.30 pm

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Co-op Hall, 127 Seven Sisters Rd., N1
Thursday, 13th January, 1966, at 8 pm
KIBBUTZ IN CAPITALISM